

Urge FAA to Postpone Efforts to Realign Air Traffic Control Services in Florida Until Comprehensive Review is Conducted

(Washington, DC) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-FL) sent the following letter to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Randy Babbitt. The letter requests the postponement of efforts to realign air traffic control (ATC) services in Florida until a reassessment and comprehensive safety and cost analysis have been conducted. Joining Hastings on the letter are Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) and Representatives Allen Boyd (D-FL), Corrine Brown (D-FL), Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL), Kathy Castor (D-FL), Ted Deutch (D-FL), Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Alan Grayson (D-FL), Ron Klein (D-FL), Suzanne M. Kosmas (D-FL), Kendrick B. Meek (D-FL), Jeff Miller (R-FL), Bill Posey (R-FL), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Thomas J. Rooney (R-FL), and Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL). **(Please find below and attached a copy of the letter.)**

July 21, 2010

Mr. J. Randolph Babbitt
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Babbitt:

We write today regarding the recently released report by the Department of Transportation's Inspector General (IG) concerning the consolidation of the Terminal Radar Approach Control facility (TRACON) at Boise. Because the IG's report confirms the state delegation's long-held convictions that such consolidations do not save money or improve operational efficiency, we respectfully request that your agency postpone its efforts to realign air traffic control (ATC) services in Florida until a similar comprehensive review has been conducted.

As you know, the Florida delegation has expressed reservations regarding the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) plan to consolidate air traffic control services in our state, raising several questions about the safety and financial impacts to the local aviation communities. The IG's report appears to validate those concerns, concluding that the "FAA's cost estimates of the option to keep the TRACON in Boise were questionable." In addition, the report states that "approximately...89 percent of the FAA's projected investment costs for keeping the TRACON in Boise were questionable." We are concerned that the IG's conclusions may not be unique to Boise and, instead, could be indicative of the FAA's decision-making process in the proposed realignments throughout Florida.

Over the past several years the Florida delegation has expressed to the FAA and Department of Transportation (DOT) our collective concerns with efforts to realign air traffic control facilities and services across the state. In 2009, several of us met with Secretary Ray LaHood in West Palm Beach to express those concerns, insisting that we were unconvinced that consolidation would have any benefit to the flying public or the taxpayer, particularly if such efforts to de-combine such facilities were done without proper vetting and scrutiny. It is evident from the recent report that the FAA's validations for Boise did not stand up against such vetting and scrutiny. The IG found that the "FAA's business case was flawed and lacked transparency," raising questions about whether any of the intended goals are achieved through consolidation.

The IG report on Boise concludes that the FAA "must periodically reassess business cases for consolidating air traffic facilities to evaluate whether the assumptions underlying any projected cost-savings remain valid and adjust the course of action as appropriate." We applaud your decision to reverse the Boise TRACON transfer proposal after learning of the flaws in the business case. We believe that the plans for realigning the radar facilities in Florida should be placed on hold until such a reassessment and comprehensive safety and cost analysis have been conducted.

We appreciate your attention to this critical aviation safety matter and look forward to your timely response.

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is Vice Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and Co-Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

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 [FL Delegation Letter to FAA.pdf](#)